



**CITY OF MANCHESTER**  
*Health Department*

## **West Nile Virus Fact Sheet**

### **What is West Nile Virus?**

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne viral disease. This rare but serious disease is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes spread the virus by biting humans, horses, and other animals. West Nile Virus can also spread in other ways. For example, WNV can be spread to humans through blood transfusions and organ transplants from infected donors. Also, it is possible that pregnant women or breastfeeding mothers who become infected with WNV may pass the virus to their baby. Due to the unknown risk at this time and the fact that breastfeeding has well-established benefits, it is not recommended to discontinue breastfeeding.

### **What are the symptoms of WNV?**

Most WNV infections do not cause any symptoms. Symptoms will usually appear within 3 to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Mild WNV infections can cause fever, headache and body aches, often with a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. In a small percentage of people infected by the virus, the disease can be serious, even fatal. More severe infections cause headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, paralysis and sometimes death. Diagnosis is based on tests of blood or spinal fluid.

### **What is the treatment for WNV?**

There is no cure for WNV. In more severe cases, supportive therapy is used, such as intravenous (IV) fluids, ventilatory support (ventilator) and prevention of secondary infections (pneumonia, urinary tract, etc.).

### **Who is at risk for WNV?**

Everyone is at risk for WNV. However, children and adults over age 55 are more susceptible to the disease. Other factors, such as working outside or participating in outdoor recreational activities in areas where the disease is common, increase an individual's risk for WNV. The risk of getting WNV is highest between late July and the end of September.

## What can you do to protect yourself?

The best way to protect yourself is to keep mosquitoes from biting you, and to eliminate their breeding areas.

- If you must be outdoors at dusk or dawn, when mosquitoes that carry WNV are most active, wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Take special care to cover up the arms and legs of children playing outdoors.
- If outside during evening, night and dawn hours, consider using an insect repellent containing no more than 30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-methyl-meta-toluarnide). *Remember to always use the repellent in accordance with the manufacturer's directions.*
- Repair any holes in your window /door screens and make sure they are tightly attached to all your doors and windows.
- Remove all discarded tires. The used tire has become the most common domestic mosquito breeding site in this country.
- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or similar water-holding containers.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs. If not in use, keep empty and covered.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and change water in birdbaths at least twice weekly.

**For more information on West Nile Virus, contact the  
Manchester Health Department at 624-6466 x325.**



## Prevention Guidelines for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV)

### **1. Eliminate standing water and other mosquito breeding locations.**

- Remove old tires from your property.
- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or other containers. Don't overlook containers that have become overgrown by aquatic vegetation.
- Drill holes in the bottom of containers that are left outside.
- Make sure roof gutters are clean and properly draining.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools and hot tubs. If not in use, keep empty and covered and keep cover free of standing water.
- Aerate garden ponds or stock them with fish.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and wading pools when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly.
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their property.

### **2. Be aware of where mosquitoes live and breed and keep them from entering your home.**

- Mosquitoes lay their eggs in stagnant water. Weeds, tall grass, and bushes provide an ideal outdoor home for the adult *Culex pipiens* mosquito (the common northern house mosquito), which is most commonly associated with West Nile Virus.
- Mosquitoes can enter homes through unscreened windows or doors, or broken screens. Make sure that all doors and windows have tight-fitting screens and repair or replace all screens in your home that have tears or holes.

### **3. Protect yourself from mosquito bites.**

- If outside during evening, nighttime, or dawn hours when mosquitoes are most active and likely to bite, children and adults should wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks.
- Consider using an effective insect repellent containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-methyl-meta-tolamide). Use a repellent containing no more than 30% DEET. Use DEET containing insect repellents according to the manufacture's directions. Children should not apply DEET to themselves. Repellents that contain Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus have also been determined to be effective.
- Vitamin B, ultrasonic devices, incense, and bug zappers have not been shown to be effective in preventing mosquito bites.

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contact the  
Manchester Health Department at 624-6466 x325.**